

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for bending glass panels, said apparatus comprising:
 - an upper mould carriage track $[(1)]$ with successive mould carriages $[(9)]$ whose front or rear wall $[(11)]$ separates successive heating compartments $(2, 3)$ and several successive bending compartments $(4a, 4b)$ from each other, the mould carriages $[(9)]$ being adapted for an intermittent conveyance towards a press-bending compartment $[(4b)]$ having its ceiling provided with a descendable and ascendable male mould $[(22)]$;
 - a lower mould carriage track $[(21)]$ with successive mould carriages $[(9)]$ whose rear or front wall $[(11)]$ separates successive cooling compartments $(5, 6, 7)$ from each other, the mould carriages being adapted for an intermittent conveyance in a direction opposite to the conveying direction of the mould carriages present on the upper mould carriage track ;
 - a number of bending moulds $[(12)]$ supported by the mould carriages $[(9)]$;
 - preheating compartments $[(2)]$ present in the upstream end of the upper mould carriage track $[(1)]$, in which the heating of glass panels is effected by means of forced convection for which thermal energy has been obtained from glass

panels presently annealing in downstream end compartments [(7)] of the lower mould carriage track;

- radiation heating means [(13)] on the ceiling of preheating compartments [(3)] at least in some of the preheating compartments;
- radiation heating means [(14)] on the ceiling of gravitationally working bending compartments [(4a)];
- an intermediate floor ~~(15a, 15)~~ which separates the bending compartments [(4a)] and preheating compartments ~~(3, 3a)~~ from compartments ~~(5, 6)~~ therebelow ;
- a lift mechanism [(20)] for lowering the mould carriages [(9)] from the upper track [(1)] onto the lower track [(21)] together with bent glass panels;

wherein the mould carriages ~~(9)~~ being are provided with an open-structured or otherwise highly heat transmissive bottom [(10)], the mould supporting carriage [(9)] having its bottom fitted with bearer elements [(26)] and the press-bending compartment [(4b)] has its lower section fitted with brace elements [(27)] for the mould carriage [(9)], which provide bracing for the bearer elements [(26)] during a press-bending operation performed by means of the male mould [(22)], and

wherein ~~that in connection with~~ the brace elements [(27)] are provided with lifting and lowering mechanisms ~~for the brace elements, and (27),~~ characterized in that the brace elements [(27)] comprise:

- a frame ~~(28, 29, 30, 31)~~, which has the brace elements [(27)] arranged in connection therewith and which extends partly beyond the press-bending compartment's [(4b)] walls ;

- power units [(32)], which are arranged in connection with a frame portion [(31)] remaining outside the press-bending compartment's [(4b)] wall and by which the frame (28, 29, 30, 31) is ascendable and descendable.

2. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the lifting and lowering mechanism for the brace elements [(27)] comprises pneumatic or hydraulic cylinders [(32)].

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 ~~[[or 2]]~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the mould bearer elements [(26)] comprise flat bars, rods, tubes or other such beam-like elements fitted to the front and rear edges of the mould carriage's [(9)] open-structured bottom.

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in ~~any of the preceding claims 1-3, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the frame (28, 29, 30, 31) comprises:

- two elongated girders [(28)], which are disposed at a distance from each other underneath the bearer elements [(26)] and whose ends are formed with flanges [(29)] extending beyond side walls [(4c)] of the press-bending compartment [(4b)] ; and

- longitudinal beams [(31)], each of which is fitted rigidly in a lengthwise direction of the furnace between two successive flanges [(29)].

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in ~~any of the preceding claims 1-4, characterized in that~~ claim 1, further comprising, in connection with the frame, ~~(28, 29, 30, 31) are provided~~ positioning elements ~~(34, 35, 37, 38)~~ for the mould carriage ~~[[9]]~~.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in ~~any of claims 1-5, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the press-bending operation is adapted to be at least partially performed by lifting the frame ~~(28, 29, 30, 31)~~.